The proposal made by India for the setting up of a South Asia University that would bring together scholars, scientists and students from all over South Asia in a centre of excellence was welcomed enthusiastically.

The Summit has also noted with appreciation some other important proposals made by India, such as the setting up of a Regional Food Bank, a Regional Tele-Medicine Network, setting up of SAARC Museum of Textiles and Handicrafts to preserve and foster this valuable legacy of handicrafts and textiles, and the holding of a SAARC Car Rally in the run up to the 14th SAARC Summit, which will be held in India in the first quarter of 2007. We intend to develop these ideas further in close consultation with our SAARC partners.

A major theme at the Summit was cooperation in counter terrorism. There is a very strong condemnation of terrorism in the Summit Declaration and renewed commitment to eliminate this scourge, both from the region as well as from the world. For the first time, there is also a clear reference to avoid double standards in tackling this collective challenge. This is a major achievement of the Summit, and is entirely in line with India's own foreign policy objectives.

The Summit was a landmark event, which took place as SAARC enters the third decade of its existence. There was a strong sentiment amongst member countries that the time had come for us to move from a phase of declaratory and consultative processes to more practical and collaborative processes. India is a very strong advocate of collaboration in regional projects, particularly in areas such as infrastructure, poverty alleviation and dealing with cross border challenges such as natural disasters, pandemics like HIV/AIDS and Avian Flu and terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It is hoped that when India hosts the next SAARC Summit in the first quarter of 2007, the stage would have been set for a significant upgradation in regional cooperation within SAARC and the first steps would have been taken towards establishing a truly free trade area in South Asia.

Terrorist training camps in neighbouring countries

†949. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether training camps are being organized by terrorist in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and PoK;

†Original notice of question was received in Hindi

(b) if so, the number of such camps being organized country-wise;

(c) the average trainees being trained in each camp; and

(d) the measures being taken by Government to close such camps?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) Pakistan and PoK: A number of terrorist camps exist in Pakistan and PoK. The Government has, in its interaction with Pakistan at all levels, continuously stressed the fact that Pakistan has so far not taken any significant action to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism, such as launching pads, training camps, communications, funding, etc. The Government have always made it clear that the India - Pakistan dialogue process can be sustained only in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence and is critically dependent on the fulfilment of January 6,2004 commitment of President Musharraf not to permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.

Bangladesh: Bangladesh is known to have Indian insurgent groups' (HGs) camps on its soil. A list of 172 camps of IIGs was handed over by Director General, BSF to DG Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) during their meeting in September/October 2005. The issue has been frequently taken up with the Government of Bangladesh at all levels, including the highest political level. We have been assured by the Government of Bangladesh that they would not allow their territory to be used for activities inimical to India.

Nepal: As far as Nepal is concerned, there is no information regarding the existence of any training camps organized by terrorists on the Nepalese territory.

Instructions to officials not to travel to or through France

950. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had withdrawn the advice to officials not to travel to or through France;

(b) if so, whether Government are satisfied with the arrangements made in France; and

(c) if so, the steps initiated by France in this regard?